

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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FOL RPT CANBERRA 8137 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK JAKARTA
KUALA LUMPUR 22 NOV 77 QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, VN, AS

SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE BOAT CASE REFUGEES

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 8658

1. GREG HUMPHRIES, CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS) CALLED EMBOFF NOVEMBER 21 TO SAY THAT SIX OF THE SEVEN BOATS REPORTED REFTEL HAD ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIAN WATERS OVER THE WEEKEND; TWO HAD ALREADY REACHED DARWIN, AND FOUR WERE BEING ESCORTED BY ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY VESSELS FROM THE POINT WHERE THEY WERE INTERCEPTED OFF PORT KEATS, APPROXIMATELY 140 MILES SOUTHWEST OF DARWIN. ALTHOUGH THE GOA IS STILL UNCERTAIN PRECISELY HOW MANY REFUGEES ARE INVOLVED, THE FIRST NEWS REPORTS FROM DARWIN INDICATE THE NUMBER WAS ABOUT 218.

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HUMPHRIES RE-EMPHASIZED THE GOA'S GRATITUDE FOR THE ADVANCE NOTICE EMBASSY HAD BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE THEM BASED UPON REFTEL, WHICH HE SAID ENABLED THE GOA TO MAKE ADVANCE PREPARATIONS WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT. THE ARRIVAL OF THE LATEST BATCH OF UNSCHEDULED REFUGEES HAS PRESSED DARWIN'S LIMITED NUMBER OF TENTS, STOVES, HOSTELS, AND

MEDICAL FACILITIES TO A MAXIMUM.

2. SERIAL NUMBERS OF THE BOATS, ACCORDING TO HUMPHRIES, WERE AS FOLLOWS: PK-3402; VG-0531; VNKG-0395; VNKG-1062; VNKG-0493; AND VT-548.

3. SEPARATE SUBJECT: GOA IS OBVIOUSLY VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTINUING FLOW OF INFORMATION WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PASS THEM AND THE EXCHANGES THEY HAVE HAD IN WASHINGTON, BANGKOK, KUALA LUMPUR AND ELSEWHERE. WE BELIEVE THESE HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL IN CREATING A RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE AMONG THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAUCRACY. EMBASSY NOTES FROM OTHER TRFFIC THAT DEPARTMENT OFFICER ROSENBLATT MAY BE IN THIS AREA EN ROUTE FROM WASHINGTON TO BANGKOK, AND WE WOULD WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE HIM TO GOA OFFICIALS DEALING WITH REFUGEE MATTERS, IN THE HOPES THAT AUSTRALIA MIGHT BE LOBBIED TO ACCEPT A GREATER SHARE OF THE COMMON BURDEN.

4. SECOND SEPARATE SUBJECT: EMBASSY GATHERS THAT THE SUBJECT OF REFUGEES MAY HAVE COME UP AT A RECENT MEETING (LUNCHEON) BETWEEN THE COUNSELOR OF THE DEPARTMENT AND AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR RENOUF; WE WOULD, NATURALLY, BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY FEEDBACK DEPARTMENT BELIEVES MAY BE OF HELP TO US. ALSTON

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UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 23-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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